

FIRE & EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL

FIRE SERVICE

Roscommon County Council

Fire & Emergency Operations Plan Section 26, Fire Services Act, 1981 & 2003

Made and adopted under the Common Seal of the County Council of the County of Roscommon this _____ day of _____, 2010.

Present when the Common Seal of the County Council of the County of Roscommon was affixed hereto:

Signed: _____ Mayor

Signed: _____ Director Of Services

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SECTION 1 – PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this Fire & Emergency Operations Plan is to fulfil Roscommon County Council's statutory obligation as a Fire Authority as outlined in **Section 26 of the Fire Services Act, 1981**. The plan also enables the Fire Authority, within its normal capabilities, to make better use and more orderly provision for such Fire and Emergency operations as may be expected to arise within its functional area.

This plan only deals with arrangements made with regard to Fire and Emergency operations. It does not take account of the substantial volume of Fire Safety and Fire Prevention work carried out by the Fire Service Section.

Section 26 of the Fire Services Act, 1981, states:

“Each Fire Authority which maintains a Fire Brigade shall prepare (and, as occasion requires, revise) plans for fire and emergency operations showing the provision made by it in respect of:

- *Organisation*
- *Fire Stations*
- *Appliances*
- *Equipment*
- *Water supplies and extinguishing agents*
- *Training*
- *Operational procedure and such other matters as may be relevant for dealing with operations of an emergency nature under Section 25*

Section 25 of the Fire Services Act, 1981, states:

*“A Fire Authority **may** carry out or assist in any operations of an emergency nature, whether or not a risk of fire is involved, and a Fire Authority may accordingly make such provision for the rescue or safeguarding of persons*

and protection of property as it considered necessary for the purposes of that function.”

The Fire & Emergency Operations Plan also includes reference to operational duties imposed on the Fire Authority by Sections 10(2) and 10(3) of the Fire Services Act, 1981.

Section 10(2) of the Fire Services Act, 1981,states

“a Fire Authority shall

- (a) make provision for the prompt extinguishing of fires in buildings and other places of all kinds in it’s functional area and for the protection and rescue of persons and property from injury by fire, and*
- (b) establish and maintain a fire brigade, provide premises and make other provisions as it considers necessary or desirable for such purposes and*
- (c) make adequate provision for the reception and response to calls for assistance of the fire brigade*

Section 10(3) of the Fire Services Act, 1981, states:

“A Fire Authority shall, in exercise of its functions under subsection (2), have regard (in addition to all other relevant considerations) to the nature of the fire hazards and the probable incidence and extent of fires in it’s functional area, the character of the area and the value of the property liable to be damaged by fires.”

The plan shall be reviewed from time to time as deemed appropriate. It should be noted that the above function is a reserved function under Section 26(3) of Fire Services Act 1981.

Definitions

Fire Brigade as per Fire Services Act 1981

“ A Fire Brigade means an organised body of persons trained and equipped for extinguishing fires occurring in buildings and other places and for rescuing persons and property from such fires and includes the vehicles and equipment with which that body is equipped”

Extinguishing of a fire as per Fire Services Act 1981

“Extinguishing of a fire shall be construed as including the prevention of a fire from spreading”

Retained Fire Fighters

Officers and Fire Fighters of Fire Brigades are part-time, permanent employees of Roscommon County Council. They are employed in accordance with the Conditions, Duties, Pay, Disciplinary Code, etc relating to part-time fire fighters in Roscommon Fire Service.

SECTION 2 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SECTION 2.1 – ORGANISATION

Roscommon County Council is the Fire Authority for the total County of Roscommon operating generally under the Fire Services Act, 1981 & 2003.

The Fire Service is organised under the Chief Fire Officer who is a professional, technically qualified officer, into the following sections:

- Fire Safety & Prevention,
- Fire Service Operations,
- Administration.

The operational Fire Service is provided by retained Fire Fighters reporting to a retained Station Officer. The Station Officers report to a Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officer who in turn reports to the Chief Fire Officer. There are six Fire Stations in County Roscommon and they are located as follows:

- Roscommon Town (Headquarters),
- Castlerea,
- Ballaghaderreen,
- Boyle,
- Elphin,
- Strokestown.

Neighbouring Counties also provide fire cover for parts of County Roscommon and they are: Galway, Mayo, Sligo, Leitrim, Longford and Westmeath.

SECTION 2.2 – FIRE STATIONS

Roscommon Fire Service utilises six Fire Stations as detailed above. Large Fire Station projects have usually received capital funding from the DoEH&LG.

It is recommended that Roscommon County Council continue to (a) Fund upgrading of the Fire Stations (b) Upgrade welfare facilities in Fire Stations and (c) Provide ongoing maintenance works in Fire Stations

It is recommended that Roscommon County Council continue to apply to the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government seeking funding for upgrading of the Fire Stations, as required, welfare facilities in the Fire Stations and ongoing maintenance works in same.

SECTION 2.3 – APPLIANCES

Roscommon Fire Service maintains fire appliances in six Stations throughout the county. There are a variety of different types of appliances in operation, i.e. Wrl (normal fire appliance called Class “B” Appliance), H.P. (Hydraulic Platform), E.T. (Emergency Tender) and vehicles with off road capabilities such as 4 wheel drives. The DoEH&LG normally provide funding for the purchase of such vehicles.

We would normally expect to get a life span of 20 years from a new Class B fire appliance (Wrl), 15 years as a First Turnout Vehicle and 5 further years as a Second Turnout Vehicle.

In relation to specialist vehicles i.e. Hydraulic Platforms, Emergency Tenders, etc. we would expect to get a life span of 20 – 25 years from a new vehicle.

WrL	Class “B” Fire Engine
WrC	Water Tanker
ET	Emergency Tanker
HP	Hydraulic Platform

SECTION 2.4 – EQUIPMENT

Roscommon Fire Service utilises a broad range of equipment in the delivery of the operational service:

- *Breathing Apparatus Equipment,*
- *Hazardous Materials Equipment,*
- *Crash Rescue Equipment,*
- *Fire Fighting Equipment,*
- *General Equipment.*

It is recommended that Roscommon County Council continue to fund Fire Service Equipment including the following:

- **Ongoing upgrading of Fire Fighters Personal Protective Equipment,**
- **Ongoing Upgrading of Crash Rescue Equipment,**
- **Upgrading of Fire Fighting equipment.**

SECTION 2.5 – WATER SUPPLIES

Each WrL appliance carries 1800L of water in an on-board tank. This generally provides a 20 minute supply to one high pressure hose-reel and is likely to be capable of extinguishing room fires, vehicle fires, small out-house fires, rubbish fires, chimney fires or roof space fires etc. There are no WrCs based in County Roscommon, however an application for two such machines has been made to the DoEH&LG.

While each Fire Brigade surveys the condition, accessibility, water flow and marking, of all public fire hydrants in its operational area on a regular basis, a comprehensive survey “to examine the location and adequacy of water supplies for fire fighting purposes” as required by Section 10 (10) of the Fire Services Act 1981 has not as yet been carried out.

Roscommon Fire Service also advise on requirements for water supply for commercial and housing developments when dealing with planning referrals.

Under Section 29 of the Fire Services Act 1981, the

(1) The functions of a sanitary authority for the provision of a supply of water shall extend to the supply of water for fire-fighting purposes and the provision and maintenance of fire hydrants at such places as the fire authority requires.

(2) Where a fire authority represents to a sanitary authority that reasonable provision has not been made for a supply of water for fire-fighting purposes, the sanitary authority shall consult with the fire authority as to the measures required and shall take such measures as may be agreed.

SECTION 2.6 – TRAINING

Section 15 of the Fire Services Act 1981, places a statutory duty on all fire authorities to make arrangements for the efficient training of personnel in the Fire Service. In general training, there are three levels of training provided:

- National training courses provided for Junior Officers and Senior Officers by the Fire Services Council, a statutory body established under the Fire Services Act, 1981, to provide training to Fire Service personnel.
- Centralised training courses provided at County level to include for localised risks.
- Local Brigade training.

It is recommended that Roscommon County Council continue to provide training at Station, County and National Level for all its Fire Service Personnel as per the Fire Service Council Guidelines.

SECTION 2.7 – HEALTH & SAFETY

The Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act, 2005 imposes certain duties on both employers and employees.

Roscommon Fire Service has taken many steps towards meeting its obligations.

The current Health & Safety statement along with the Appendices was issued in May 2008. This Safety Statement followed the template as issued by the DoEH&LG under the auspice of the Fire Services Change Programme.

A significant advance was the recent introduction of the CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT (CISM) Programme. This programme has been specifically introduced to provide ongoing practical support to every member of Roscommon Fire Service when dealing with critical incident stress.

SECTION 2.8 – COMMUNICATIONS

Section 10(2)(C) of the Fire Services Act, 1981, requires the Fire Authority to make adequate provision for the reception of and response to calls for the assistance of the Fire Brigade. In order to fulfil this function, Roscommon County Council in common with all other participating authorities has established a “Regional Communications Centre” at Castlebar Fire Station. This emergency call handling centre is also known as the COMPUTER AIDED MOBILISATION PROJECT (CAMP).

Roscommon Fire Service utilises communications equipment through the following in the course of delivering the service:

- Appliance:
- Station:
- Fire-Fighter:
- Rostered Senior Fire Officer:

For effective communications all Station Officers, Senior Officers and front line fire appliances have mobile phones. All front line fire appliances and Senior Officers have hand held portable radios (VHF). All fire stations and front line appliances have main radios (UHF) so that they can communicate directly with CAMP.

SECTION 2.9 – OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Operational practices and procedures are generally in accordance with the Fire Service Drill Books, Fire Services Council Handbooks, Fire Service Training Manuals and Manuals of Firemanship and as specified in Brigade Orders from time to time (Brigade Orders are mandatory instructions issued to all Fire Fighters by the Chief Fire Officer). Breathing Apparatus procedures are in accordance with B.A. Procedures as issued by DoEH&LG and/or Fire Services Council.

Under Section 25 of the Fire Services Act, 1981, Roscommon Fire Service equips itself for and responds to call outs for road traffic accidents, flooding, chemical incidents, spillages, storms/severe weather, aircraft incidents/emergencies and fires. Roscommon Fire Service also equips itself for participation in the event of a major emergency alongside the other Local Authorities, Gardai and Health Service Executive of the Western Region (Galway, Mayo, Roscommon).

SECTION 2.10 – OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

The statutory responsibility for determining fire cover standards and providing response capability rests with the local Fire Authority. There are at present no national standards with which the Fire Authority must comply and as such there are no national guidelines on the standard of fire cover to be provided in the county. At present many Fire Authorities in Ireland aspire to meet the UK categories A to D and Remote Rural (see below) in terms of response time and weight of attack.

Category C:

Category C risk areas are normally to be found in the suburbs of the larger towns and the built up areas of smaller towns. For the area to be classified as Category C Risk it should contain built up areas of substantial size, where risk of life loss or damage to property in the event of fire is usually low, although in certain areas the risk of death or injury may be relatively high. Concentrations of property may vary but will generally be of limited extent.

This risk Category C would apply to the urban areas of County Roscommon. The minimum first attendance for this type of risk is one pump within 8-10 minutes with a crew.

Category D:

Category D risk includes all areas other than those classed as Remote Rural and those not falling within Categories A-C. The minimum first attendance for this type of risk is one pump within 20 minutes with a crew.

It should be noted that a Project Team is currently working on behalf of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on a Risk Based Approach to Emergency Cover as part of the Fire Service Change Programme.

It is recommended that the Council continue to aspire to current UK Fire Cover Standards and assess various methods of ensuring that our standards do not reduce, and that the recommended outcomes of the Fire Service Change Programme be implemented when they are published.

SECTION 2.11 – FIRE PREVENTION

It should be noted that this plan outlines only the arrangements made with regards to fire and emergency operations and does not take account of the substantial volume of fire prevention and fire safety work carried out by Roscommon County Council as a Fire Authority.

Roscommon County Council's **Fire Prevention Staff** advise on current fire safety standards required for proposed and existing developments.

Fire Officers also carry out inspections of Places of Public Assembly and other high-risk premises in the County.

SECTION 2.12 – REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES 2002 to date

Fire Stations:

- Roscommon Town Fire Station was completed in 2007. This new Headquarters Fire Station now houses the Fire Brigade and the management staff of the Fire Service.
- Castlerea Fire Station was recently fitted with an Exhaust Gas Extraction System (EGES) funded by the DoEH&LG.
- Ballaghaderreen Fire Station was completed in 2006 (new build).
- Boyle Fire Station was recently fitted with an Exhaust Gas Extraction System (EGES) funded by the DoEH&LG.
- Elphin Fire Station was recently fitted with an Exhaust Gas Extraction System (EGES) funded by the DoEH&LG. The roof of the appliance bays was also replaced, funded locally.
- Strokestown Fire Station was recently fitted with an Exhaust Gas Extraction System (EGES) funded by the DoEH&LG.
- All 6 of our Fire Stations have the EGES, all funded by the DoEH&LG.

Appliances:

- All stations have 1 front line WrL each. The appliances are 2002, 2002, 2006, 1999, 2006 and 1993 and they are currently deployed in Roscommon, Castlerea, Ballaghaderreen, Boyle, Elphin and Strokestown Fire Stations respectively.
- Roscommon and Castlerea have 1 second line WrL each and these are used as reserve vehicles.
- 1 new Emergency Tender (ET) has been delivered to Roscommon Town in Summer 2009.
- 2 new 4 x 4 vehicles were purchased in 2006 are currently deployed in Roscommon and Strokestown.
- All 4 other stations have a 4 x 4 vehicle each.
- The Hydraulic Platform (HP) is currently deployed in Roscommon Town.

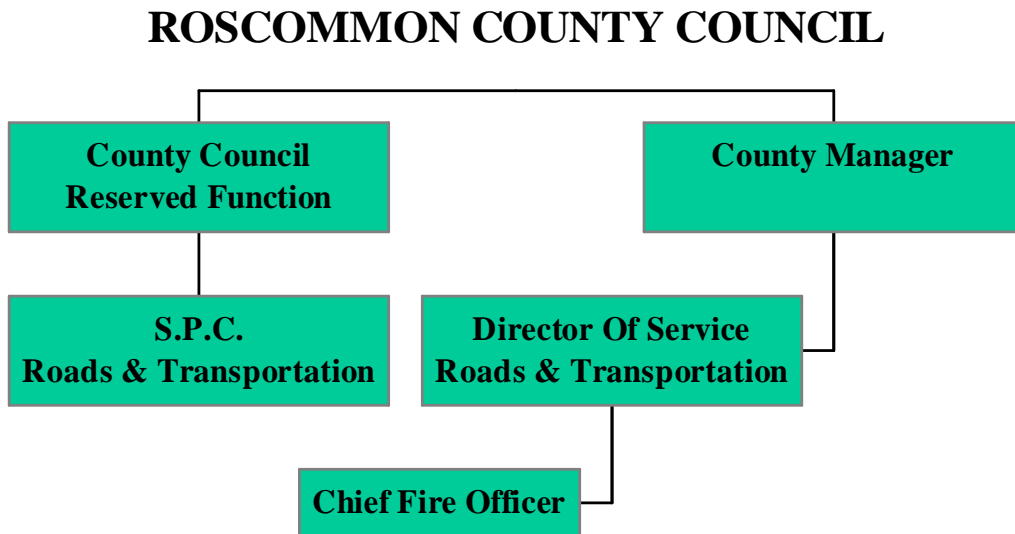
Equipment:

- Over the past few years all Breathing Apparatus (BA) steel cylinders were replaced with new 9 litre light weight carbon composite cylinders. In addition, 60 new Breathing Apparatus (BA) sets were also purchased.
- 6 no. Thermal Imaging Cameras were purchased in 2006 & 2007.
- 7 no. Portable Pumps were purchased in 2006, 2007 & 2008.
- 6 no. Floating Pumps were purchased in 2007.
- 6 no. Gas Detectors were purchased in 2007.
- 24 no. Intrinsically Safe and 16 no. Non-Intrinsically Safe Hand Portable Radios were purchased in 2004, 2005 & 2006.
- 6 no. Sets of Hydraulic Crash Rescue equipment for all our front line appliances were purchased in 2006.
- 7 no. Sets of 110v Battery Operated equipment were purchased in 2006 & 2007.
- 6 no. Sets of Air Lifting Equipment were purchased in 2006.
- 2 no. new WrL appliances were purchased in 2002.
- 2 no. new WrL appliances were purchased in 2006.
- 2 no. new 4 x 4 vehicles were purchased in 2006.
- 1 no. set of Low Pressure Heavy Lift Capacity Airbags were purchased in 2008.
- 2 no. Decontamination Showers were purchased in 2008.
- 1 no. High Expansion Foam Generator was purchased in 2008.
- 4 no. Chemical Splash Suits were purchased in 2006.
- 80 Wildfire Fire Fighting Suits were purchased in 2006 & 2007.
- 1 new ET appliance was purchased in 2008.
- 1 new WrL appliance was purchased in 2009.

SECTION 3 – ORGANISATION

Roscommon County Council is the Fire Authority for the total County of Roscommon operating generally under the Fire Services Act, 1981.

The Fire Authority in Roscommon County Council forms part of the Roads & Transportation Directorate under the direction of the Director Of Services for Roads & Transportation. The Director Of Services (DOS) and the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) are the designated Officers for the Executive Functions under the Fire Services Act 1981 (see organisational chart 1).



The Fire Services are organised under the Chief Fire Officer who is a professional, technically qualified officer (see organisational chart 2).

Fire prevention normally entails inspections of buildings under the Fire Services Act, 1981, assessment and provision of reports on Planning Applications, the processing of Fire Safety Certificate Applications and the carrying out of inspections in relation to Dance & Liquor Licence Applications.

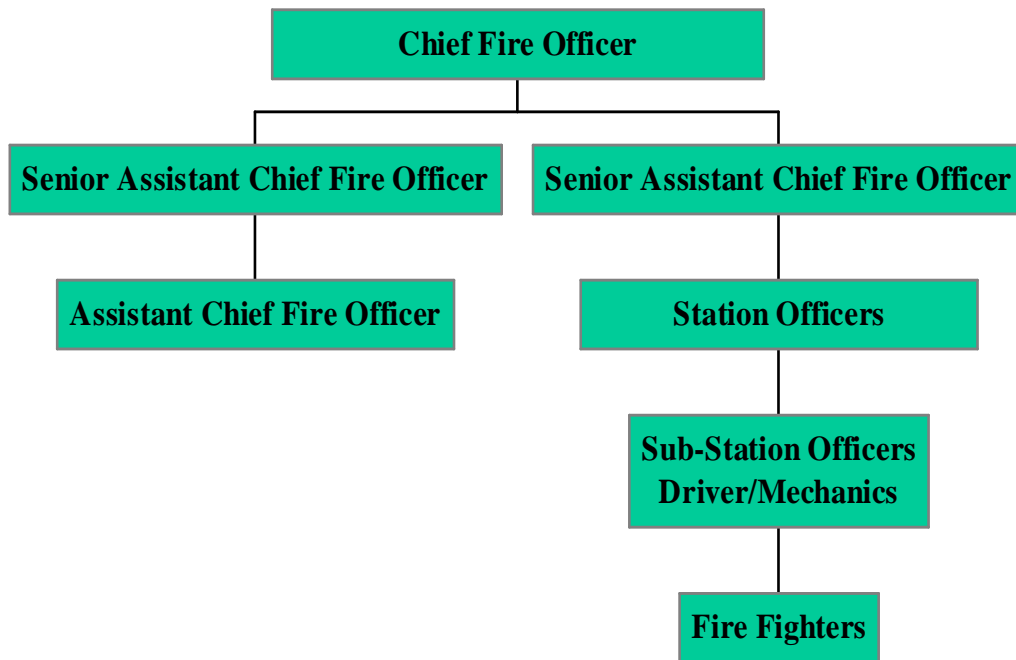
Operations are provided by crews who are Retained Fire Fighters reporting to a Retained Station Officer who in turn report to the Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officers. In addition, at least one Senior Fire Officer out of four is Rostered On Call each week to assist in the handling of more serious incidents.

- 6 no. Retained Station Officers,
- 6 no. Retained Sub-Station Officers,
- 12 no. Retained Driver/Mechanics,
- 34 no. Retained Fire Fighters.

There are 6 no. Fire Stations in County Roscommon located as follows:
Roscommon, Castlerea, Ballaghaderreen, Boyle, Elphin & Strokestown.

Mayo County Council provide the statutory obligation as regards call-outs of the Fire Service for Roscommon County Council through the Western Region Communications Centre attached to the Castlebar Fire Station, Co. Mayo.

Roscommon Fire Service



Roscommon Fire Service also provides emergency cover and assistance when requested into neighbouring Counties such as Leitrim, Sligo, Mayo, Galway, Longford and Westmeath. Vice versa, all previously mentioned Fire Authorities also provide emergency cover and assistance when requested into County Roscommon.

SECTION 4 - FIRE STATIONS

Roscommon Fire Service utilises six Fire Stations in the following locations:

Roscommon, Castlerea, Ballaghaderreen, Boyle, Elphin and Strokestown. A brief description of all Fire Stations is outlined below. All Fire Station projects received capital funding from DoEH&LG.

1. Roscommon Town HQ (RN11)



1 no. CFO
2 no. SACFO
1 no. ACFO
1 no. AO
1 no. SO
1 no. SSO
2 no. D/M
7 no. F/F

Fireground Area: 208 sq Miles

No. Of Calls for 2008 : 124

The Roscommon Town Fire Station was completed in 2007. In addition to housing the Roscommon Fire Brigade, the administration section accommodates the Senior Fire Officers and associated clerical support staff. Also included is one number meeting room and one number lecture room.

The retained accommodation and facilities consists of a six bay appliance room, BA room, muster room, drying room, toilet/shower facilities, storage rooms, compressor area, drill yard, tower, Station Officers office and watch room.

2. Castlerea (RN12)



1 no. SO
1 no. SSO
2 no. D/M
7 no. F/F

Fireground Area: 192 sq Miles
No. Of Calls for 2008 : 132

The Castlerea Fire Station was built in 1989 and is located adjacent to the train station close to the town centre. The station accommodation consists of a two bay appliance room, watch room, muster room, toilet/shower facilities, BA room, store room, compressor area, lecture room, drill yard and tower.

3. Ballaghaderreen (RN13)



1 no. SO
1 no. SSO
2 no. D/M
5 no. F/F

Fireground Area: 101 sq Miles

No. Of Calls for 2008 : 125

The Ballaghaderreen Fire Station was completed in 2006 and is located on the Dublin Road close to the town centre. The station accommodation consists of a two bay appliance room, watch room, muster room, toilet/shower facilities, BA room, store room, lecture room, drill yard and tower.

4. Boyle (RN14)



1 no. SO
1 no. SSO
2 no. D/M
5 no. F/F

Fireground Area: 100 sq Miles

No. Of Calls for 2008 : 85

The Boyle Fire Station was completed in 1993 and is located on the Marion Road close to the town centre. The station accommodation consists of a two bay appliance room, watch room, muster room, toilet/shower facilities, BA room, store room, lecture room, drill yard and tower. The station was extensively refurbished in 2008.

5. Elphin (RN15)



1 no. SO
1 no. SSO
2 no. D/M
5 no. F/F

Fireground Area: 92 sq Miles

No. Of Calls for 2008 : 103

The Elphin Fire Station was completed in 1980 and is located on the Carrick Road close to the town centre. The station accommodation consists of a two bay appliance room, watch room, toilet/shower facilities, BA room, store room, lecture room, drill yard and tower. The station was re-roofed in 2007 and new appliance doors were fitted in 2006.

6. Strokestown (RN16)



1 no. SO
1 no. SSO
2 no. D/M
5 no. F/F

Fireground Area: 108 sq Miles

No. Of Calls for 2008 : 94

The Strokestown Fire Station was completed in 1996 and is located in the town centre. The station accommodation consists of a two bay appliance room, watch room, muster room, drying room, toilet/shower facilities, BA room, store room, lecture room, drill yard and tower.

Fire Stations Overview:

- Roscommon Town Fire Station was completed in 2007. This new Headquarters Fire Station now houses the Fire Brigade and the management staff of the Fire Service.
- Castlerea Fire Station was recently fitted with an Exhaust Gas Extraction System (EGES) funded by the DoEH&LG.
- Ballaghaderreen Fire Station was completed in 2006 (new build).
- Boyle Fire Station was recently fitted with an Exhaust Gas Extraction System (EGES) funded by the DoEH&LG.
- Elphin Fire Station was recently fitted with an Exhaust Gas Extraction System (EGES) funded by the DoEH&LG. The roof of the appliance bays was also replaced, funded locally.
- Strokestown Fire Station was recently fitted with an Exhaust Gas Extraction System (EGES) funded by the DoEH&LG.

All 6 of our Fire Stations have the EGES, all funded by the DoEH&LG

SECTION 5 – APPLIANCES

Fleet Details

Year	Appliance Make WrL	Brigade Location	Remarks
2006	Scania	Ballaghaderreen	Modern
2006	Scania	Elphin	Modern
2002	Scania	Roscommon	Modern
2002	Scania	Castlerea	Modern
1999	Mercedes	Boyle	Recently refurbished
1993	Scania	Strokestown	Needs replacement
1993	Mercedes	Roscommon	Recently refurbished
1990	Dennis	Castlerea	Needs replacement

Year	Jeep/4x4	Brigade Location	Remarks
2006	Ford Ranger Crew Cab	Roscommon	Modern
2006	Ford Ranger Crew Cab	Strokestown	Modern
2002	Nissan (Canopy)	Castlerea	Needs replacement by a Crew Cab
2001	Nissan (Canopy)	Boyle	Needs replacement by a Crew Cab
1999	Nissan (Canopy)	Ballaghaderreen	Needs replacement by a Crew Cab
1994	Toyota (Canopy)	Elphin	Needs replacement by a Crew Cab

Year	Appliance Type	Brigade Location	Remarks
1987	Hydraulic Platform	Ballaghaderreen	The appliance needs a new chassis
2009	Emergency Tender	Roscommon	Modern

**FOLLOWING RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITH THE DOE, THEY HAVE
AGREED TO FUND US THE RESOURCES FOR 2 WATER TANKERS**

Costs:	Class "B" Appliance	€ 320,000
	Emergency Tender	€ 290,000
	Crew Cab Jeep	€ 35,000
	Water Tanker	€ 170,000
	HP Chassis	€ 300,000

SECTION 6 – EQUIPMENT

Breathing Apparatus (BA) Sets.

All BA sets in Roscommon Fire Service are compressed air open circuit type sets. They operate up to 300 bar pressure but all cylinders are nine litre nominal capacity and operate at 200-220 bar working pressure. The sets are automatic positive pressure sets operated by first breath mechanism. Almost all sets have an electronic cylinder contents gauge integrated into the personal distress signal unit. However, some sets incorporate pneumatic contents gauges with separate personal distress signal units. These have been retained for operational reasons, in particular training. This equipment is fully compatible with the equipment in use by adjoining fire services. Cylinder filling facilities are provided in Roscommon and Castlerea Fire Stations. While most of our cylinders would be filled in either of these locations, facilities provided in adjoining fire services are used also. Filling facilities are located as follows:

- Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim.
- Longford, Co. Longford.
- Athlone, Co. Westmeath.
- Castlerea, Co. Roscommon.
- Roscommon Town, Co. Roscommon.

All cylinders are of the light weight carbon composite type provided with in-line, non-ratchet valves and nylon covers. The number of sets and cylinders maintained in each Fire Brigade is set to ensure that every qualified wearer (apart from the Station Officer) has a set. Two cylinders are provided for each set, one on the set for use and one for changing after using the set (servicing). Two other cylinders are provided in each Brigade to power any air operated equipment that we may have. A number of sets and cylinders are also kept in the Headquarters for Senior Officers use. A bank of cylinders is also maintained in Roscommon HQ for operational and training uses.

The following would be the normal complement of equipment maintained by Roscommon Fire Service in the locations indicated:

BRIGADE	NO. OF SETS	NO. OF CYLINDERS
Roscommon	10	22
Castlerea	10	22
Ballaghaderreen	8	18
Boyle	8	18
Elphin	8	18
Strokestown	8	18
HQ	14	28

Thermal Imaging Cameras

Thermal imaging cameras substitute for a fire-fighters sight in situations such as smoke logged buildings and poor visibility. The camera detects infra-red radiation and can pin-point casualties or fire hot spots. The cameras can be used at a wide range of incidents. At present there are six number cameras in Roscommon Fire Service (one for each Brigade).

Gas Detectors

Six number portable, hand held gas detectors were issued (one per Brigade) for operational uses. The detectors are capable of detecting oxygen depletion, flammable gases and toxic gases such as carbon monoxide and hydrogen sulphide.

Chemical Equipment

At present there are six number Chemical Gas Tight Suits strategically located around the County. In addition to these, there are four number Chemical Splash Suits located in Roscommon Town. After a chemical incident all suits and equipment must be decontaminated. This is done using decontamination showers of which there two

located in Roscommon Town. All of this equipment is primarily for use by fire-fighters. Mass decontamination is provided by the Health Services Executive.

Crash Rescue Equipment (RTA's)

All first turnout appliances have a full set of crash rescue equipment incorporating hydraulic, air and battery operated tools.

The hydraulic tools include petrol power pump, cutters, spreaders, rams and hoses. The air equipment includes different types of airbags, regulators, manifolds and hoses. The battery tools include saws, drills and associated blades/bits.

Associated equipment includes vehicle stabilisation kits, glass management kits, sharp protection, casualty protection, first responder bags, spinal collars, spinal boards and airbag covers.

General Equipment

In general, all first turnout appliances (WrL) carry the following equipment:

- Cutters, spreaders, rams, power unit and hoses.
- 40 Ton & 20 Ton high pressure air lifting bags, manifolds, regulators and hoses.
- Vehicle stabilisation kits, glass management kits, sharp protection, casualty protection, first responder bags, spinal collars, spinal boards and airbag covers.
- Suction hoses, 70mm hoses, 45 mm hoses and first aid hose reels.
- Selection of fire-fighting branches, standpipes, keys and bars.
- Portable and main pump.
- 13.5m ladder, 10.5m ladder, roof ladder and short extension ladder.
- Low expansion foam branch, inductor and drums of foam.
- BA sets, BA cylinders, Entry Control Board and guidelines.
- Chimney rods, scrapers, brushes and stirrup pump.
- Hose ramps, bollards, warning signs and flashing lights.
- Main radio, hand portable radios and mobile phone.

- Salvage sheets, buckets, shovels, spades and ceiling hooks.
- Water and foam fire extinguishers.
- Portable petrol 110v generator, 110v lights and leads.
- Dividing/collecting breeches, hose adaptors and hose slings.
- Hand lamps, BA torches and hi-vis jackets.
- Lifejackets and thermal imaging cameras.
- Suction keys and collecting heads.
- Selection of small and large tools.

In addition to the above all stations have jeeps which in turn carry the following:

- Floating pump and jerry cans.
- Oil dispersant and oil dry.
- Accident signs and lighting.
- Selection of small and large tools.

It is recommended that Roscommon County Council continue to fund Fire Service Equipment including the following:

- **Ongoing upgrading of Fire Fighters Personal Protective Equipment,**
- **Ongoing Upgrading of Crash Rescue Equipment,**
- **Upgrading of Fire Fighting equipment.**

SECTION 7 – WATER SUPPLIES

Each WrL appliance carries 1800L of water in an on-board tank. This generally provides a 20 minute supply to one high pressure hose-reel and is likely to be capable of extinguishing room fires, vehicle fires, small out-house fires, rubbish fires, chimney fires or roof space fires etc. Where water mains, open source supplies or stored water supplies are available, each WrL appliance has the capability to pump 35 litres per second from the main pump or 15 litres per second from a portable pump.

Each Fire Brigade surveys the condition, accessibility and water flow of all public fire hydrants in its operational area on a regular basis. While each Fire Brigade is familiar with the public piped water supply in each area and reasonably familiar with most open sources, a comprehensive survey is needed.

Roscommon Fire Service also advise on requirements for water supply for commercial and housing developments when dealing with planning referrals.

Under Section 29 of the Fire Services Act 1981, the

- (1) The functions of a sanitary authority for the provision of a supply of water shall extend to the supply of water for fire-fighting purposes and the provision and maintenance of fire hydrants at such places as the fire authority requires.*
- (2) Where a fire authority represents to a sanitary authority that reasonable provision has not been made for a supply of water for fire-fighting purposes, the sanitary authority shall consult with the fire authority as to the measures required and shall take such measures as may be agreed.*

With respect to commercial developments the following requirements apply:

Adequate water supply shall be provided for fire fighting purposes in accordance with the requirements of the Fire Authority and **BS5306: Part 1: 1988 - “Fire Extinguishing Installations and Equipment on Premises Hydrant Systems, Hose Reels and Foam Inlets”**.

Buildings or compartments of buildings having a ground floor area exceeding 1,000m² shall have provided within land in the same occupation as the building, fire hydrants at a distance of not less than 6m or not more than 46m from the building. Hydrants shall be provided within 30m of a vehicle access roadway if required. Hydrants shall be provided on the Scale of 1 hydrant to every 1000m² of ground floor area.

With respect to housing developments the following requirements apply:

Overall Site Development shall comply with Department of the Environment & Local Government “Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas 1998” as regards the following: -

Section 4 Water Supply for fire fighting / fire hydrants.

Layout of roads and turning circles for Fire Appliance shall comply with Section 2 of above recommendations.

SECTION 8 – TRAINING

Section 15 of the Fire Services Act 1981, places a statutory duty on all fire authorities to make arrangements for the efficient training of personnel in the Fire Service. The Fire Services Council can assist fire authorities with specialised courses under its annual training programme, the primary responsibility for the overall training of brigades rests with the individual authority.

In general training there are three levels of training in accordance with Department Guidelines:

- National training courses provided for Junior Officers and Senior Officers by the Fire Services Council, a statutory body established under the Fire Services Act, 1981, to provide training to Fire Service personnel.
- Centralised training courses provided at County level to include for localised risks.
- Local Brigade training.

Senior Officer Training

Training courses are provided by the Fire Services Council for Senior Officers. Courses for Senior Officers are delivered both in Ireland and England. The current list of Senior Officer training courses is detailed below:

- Operational Foundation/Induction Training.
- Breathing Apparatus Wearer.
- Operational Command / Brigade Command.
- Operational Command (Development).
- Senior Command Refresher.
- Fire Safety Engineering.

Junior Officer Training

Training courses are provided by the Fire Services Council for Junior Officers.

Junior Officer Command courses available:

- Unit I & Unit II (emphasising command & control, special incident procedures, methods of instruction etc.).

Senior and Junior Officer Specialist Courses Available

- Hazardous Materials (HAZ-MAT)
- Road Traffic Accident Instructor (RTAI)
- Methods of Instruction (MOI)

- Breathing Apparatus Instructor (BAI)
- Breathing Apparatus Maintenance (BAM)
- Line Rescue Instructor (LRI)
- Confined Space Rescue Instructor (CSRI)
- Fire Behaviour Instructor (FBI)
- Aircraft Fire-fighting (AF)
- Brigade Instructor (BI)
- Positive Pressure Ventilation Instructor (PPVI)
- Pump Instructor (PI)
- First Responder (FR)
- Emergency Fire Appliance Driving (EFAD)
- Basic Life Support Instructor (BLS)

Fire Fighter Training

All new recruits must attend an initial two week induction training course (pass/fail). The induction course may be run by Roscommon Fire Service or by another Fire Service. All drills undertaken in the induction course and at station level are in accordance with the DoEH&LG guidelines.

All new recruits must attend a two week breathing apparatus wearers course (pass/fail). This is generally completed within their first year of service. All certified BA wearers are required to attend a two day BA refresher every two years (recommended). Each BA wearer is obliged to attend.

All Fire Brigades in Roscommon Fire Service undertake station training for three hours per drill night which is two drill nights per month, every month. The drill programme is laid down and sent out from HQ every year.

In addition to the above mentioned, there are specialist training courses generally available:

Hydraulic Platform Operator (Roscommon Town only), Road Traffic Accident, First Responder, Manual Handling, Driving, Fire Behaviour and Pump Operator.

Driving

All Fire Service personnel were offered the opportunity to obtain the “C” licence. Some of this training is ongoing and it is hoped that it will continue into the future.

Also at present, various personnel are attending advance driving courses. Some personnel have completed the course and it is hoped that these modules will continue.

SECTION 9 – HEALTH & SAFETY

The Health & Safety at Work Act, 2005 impose certain duties on both employers and employees. Roscommon Fire Service has taken many steps towards meeting its obligations. The current Ancillary Safety Statement was prepared and published in Summer 2008. The Safety Statement was prepared as per the DoEH&LG template issued under the auspices of the Fire Services Change Programme. Every fixed work location (Fire Station) has a copy of the statement and the appendices, easily accessible.

Critical Incident Stress Management

Critical Incident Stress is regarded as the normal reaction of people to life events that for them are unusual or abnormal. In other words, it is normal and natural for an individual who has been involved in or exposed to a critical incident to experience some degree of shock, stress or trauma. Critical Incident Stress is accompanied by a set of physical and psychological symptoms that will lessen over time. In instances where the symptoms do not disappear or lessen over time, an individual may be considered to be experiencing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, the disorder being that the symptoms persist and that the individual has not returned to normal functioning.

In the course of our work as members of Roscommon Fire Service such incidents can include:

- significant loss of life through fires, road traffic accidents or other incidents
 - suicides
 - incidents involving gruesome sights, sounds or smells
 - line of duty injury or death, or risk of injury / death
 - traumatic deaths, such as infants and children
 - victim or relative known to helper
 - prolonged incident with loss
 - threatening events
 - unintentionally injuring or killing others
- any other significant incident.

The Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Programme has been specifically introduced to provide ongoing practical support to each member of Roscommon Service personnel in dealing with critical incident stress.

Essentially there are four core dimensions to the (CISM) service all of which have been addressed as part of the implementation process in 2007:

- Education and awareness of Daily Stress, Critical Incident Stress and the importance of self-care
- Return-to-Base Group Discussion with Peer Supporter (Defusing)

- Follow-up Group Discussion with CISM Counsellor (Debriefing).
- Individual counselling.

Health Surveillance

Full Medical examinations are carried out prior to recruitment. Medical examinations are carried out for all fire-fighters in the Medical Centre, Roscommon Town by the Fire Service Doctors.

From 2007 onwards, subsequent medical examinations shall take place in accordance with the Occupational Health System for the Retained Fire Service as follows;

From recruitment until the age of 39.	Every 5 years.
From 40 - 49	Every 3 years.
From 50 - 54	Every 2 years
From 54 - 58	Every year

In exceptional circumstances it may be deemed necessary to refer a fire-fighter to the medical adviser in between routine medical examinations.

All personnel are required to submit a Sick Certificate for any Sick Leave Absence.

9.4 Vaccinations

Vaccinations are provided on a voluntary basis to all Fire Service Personnel for the following:

- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Tetanus

SECTION 10 – COMMUNICATIONS

Section 10(2)(c) of the Fire Services Act, 1981, requires the Fire Authority to make adequate provision for the reception of and response to calls for the assistance of the Fire Brigade. In order to fulfil this function Roscommon County Council in common with all other participating authorities has established a “Regional Control Centre” at Castlebar Fire Station, Co. Mayo. The Regional Communications Centre was created to improve the overall speed of response and efficiency of the Call Out System for the Fire Authorities in the Connaught Region including Donegal and became operational in 2005.

All requests for the attendance of the Fire Brigade are directed via the 999 Telecom system to the Western Regional Control Centre (‘Control’) in the Castlebar Fire Station. ‘Control’ uses a computerised system (involving an address database, a log of all available appliances and a locally pre-determined attendance for each address) to determine the appropriate response. The appropriate Fire Appliances hence Fire Stations are then alerted by ‘Control’ and a printed message is sent out to their Station(s).

It is important to note that while ‘Control’ offers a mobilisation service, it has no command function. Command is always exercised by the Officer in Charge as defined by the Fire Services Act, 1981. Roscommon County Council retains control of its own Fire Service. Brigade Orders relating to contact with ‘Control’ have been issued to each Station Officer and are available at each Station. Brigade Orders are mandatory instructions issued to all Fire-fighters by the Chief Fire Officer.

Communications Equipment

Roscommon Fire Service utilises a broad range of communications equipment in order to deliver an effective and efficient service. The equipment utilised and the location of such equipment is detailed below.

- **Base VHF Radio**
This is a mains operated radio operating on SLIABH BAWN and SHEEGOREY frequencies. This radio is essential in maintaining communication with both the appliances on the road as well as ‘Control’. In the event of an incident, this radio is manned for the duration of the incident.
- **‘Control’ Radio**
This radio receives notification of an incident from ‘Control’ and its function is to relay this to the MG4 transmitter. The first Fire Fighter to arrive at the Station will press the *acknowledge* button on this radio.
- **MG4 Transmitter**
The MG4 transmitter will set off the Fire Fighter’s alerters on receipt of communication from the ‘Control’ radio in the event of an incident.

- Fax Machine
The fax machine is used primarily for administration purposes but will also be used in the event that chemical data is requested from 'Control' in the event of an incident. 'Control' will fax the relevant chemical data to the Station and this will then be relayed by radio to the appliance.
- Telephone
The telephone is used for administration purposes as well as for communication with those who have mobile phones at incident e.g. Senior Fire Officers.
- Mobile Phone
The mobile phone is used to compliment the radio system in areas of poor coverage and also in the relaying of sensitive communication.
- Hand-Held UHF
These mobile radios are used by the Fire Fighters for fireground communication.
- Alerters
The alerter is carried by all Fire Fighters and is the means by which the Fire Fighter is informed of an incident. The MG4 transmitter relays the message from the 'Control' radio to the alerter. The alerters are programmed to recognise only the signal from the MG4 transmitter in their home Station.
- Mobile Phones
All Senior Fire Officers carry mobile phones. These can be used for communication with the appliances as well as with the Stations.
- Landline Telephones
All Senior Fire Officers have land line telephones in their homes. These can be used for communication with the appliances as well as with the Stations.
- VHF Mobile Radio
All Rostered Senior Fire Officers have VHF mobile radios in their cars.

SECTION 11 – OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Operational practices and procedures are generally in accordance with the Fire Service Drill Books, Fire Service Training Manuals and Manuals of Firemanship and as specified in Brigade Orders from time to time (Brigade Orders are mandatory instructions issued to all Fire-fighters by the Chief Fire Officer). Breathing Apparatus procedures are in accordance with B.A. Procedures as issued by DoEH&LG and/or Fire Services Council.

Fire-fighters carry a pocket alerter that can be activated by 'Control' via a transmitter in their home Station. They must be in a position to turn out the appropriate fire appliance from their Station within a period of five minutes. Communication is maintained between appliances and Stations/ 'Control' on a designated radio frequency. Relevant messages. 'Mobile To Incident', 'In Attendance' and 'Mobile And Available' etc. are passed to Stations / 'Control' so that the status of all vehicles is known at all times.

Predetermined attendances have been established for various premises and types of fires as set out in Control Room Procedures for Call Out System. Predetermined arrangements for Major Emergencies are set out in the Major Emergency Plan detailed below. Junior Officers may seek the advice/attendance of a Senior Officer at the scene of any incident.

Operations of an Emergency Nature (No Fire)

Section 25 of the Fire Services Act, 1981, states:

"A Fire Authority may carry out or assist in any operations of an emergency nature, whether or not a risk of fire is involved, and a Fire Authority may accordingly make such provision for the rescue or safeguarding of persons and protection of property as it considered necessary for the purposes of that function."

The principle "operations" to which Section 25 applies are as follows:

Road Traffic Accidents

Each Fire Station is provided with an appliance with crash rescue capability. This has been outlined in detail in Section 6 Equipment.

Flooding

Brigades respond to rescue persons trapped by flooding and to assist the Engineering Services of Roscommon County Council in flood emergencies, if required. Turnout is subject to the RSFO's authorisation.

Hazardous Substances Incidents

‘Control’ at Castlebar Fire Station is provided with a computerised database of known chemicals (Chemdata). This database provides details such as recommended emergency, environmental and first aid action, etc. This can be transmitted verbally throughout the county by the Fire Brigade radio system. In addition each Fire Station has a UN Hazchem Book and Emergency Response Guidance Book. All Fire Fighters have been issued with a Hazchem Card.

Spillages

The Fire Service response to calls, generally from the Gardaí or Roads Authority, to assist in making roads safe after the spillages of oil etc. Each first line appliance has a spill kit and a limited amount of oil dispersant and applicator to handle small spillages of oil/petroleum e.g. at R.T.A.s.

Storms/Severe Weather

The Fire Service responds to some emergency calls for severe weather. Some stations have been provided with chainsaws, PPE and the necessary training to deal with trees down. Turnout is subject to the RSFO’s authorisation.

Major Emergency Planning

In the early 80s the Department of Environment issued a model major emergency plan, this was to serve as a template for each Local Authority to draw up its own plan. The plan addresses aspects of emergency planning such as activation, pre-determined arrangements for the various Local Authority services, co-ordination with other services, etc.

A major emergency plan Steering Group and Working Group has been established consisting of representatives of the following:

- Local Authorities in the West Region
- Gardaí
- Health Services Executive

Predetermined arrangements for Major Emergencies for the Fire Service are set out in Major Emergency Plan (MEP) Predetermined Arrangements for the Fire Service.

The new framework for Major Emergency Management was launched in 2006 and implemented in Sep 2008.

SECTION 12 – OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

Overview

The statutory responsibility for determining fire cover standards and providing response capability rests with the local Fire Authority. There are at present no national standards with which the Fire Authority must comply and as such there are no national guidelines on the standard of fire cover to be provided in the county. At present many Fire Authorities in Ireland aspire to meet the UK categories A to D and Remote Rural (see below) in terms of response time and weight of attack.

British Standard of Fire Cover

In the British Standards the highest standard of fire cover that can be achieved by a Retained Station is the category C.

Category C:

Category C risk areas are normally to be found in the suburbs of the larger towns and the built up areas of smaller towns. For the area to be classified as Category C Risk it should contain built up areas of substantial size, where risk of life loss or damage to property in the event of fire is usually low, although in certain areas the risk of death or injury may be relatively high. Concentrations of property may vary but will generally be of limited extent. Examples of such areas might include:

- Developments of housing including terraced and multi-storey dwellings, deck access and blocks of flats (see also Special Risk).
- Areas of older detached and terraced multi-storey dwellings, with a predominance of property converted to multiple occupation.
- Areas of suburban terraced, semi-detached and detached residential properties.
- Mixed low-risk industrial and residential areas.

The minimum first attendance for this type of risk is one pump in 8-10 minutes with a crew.

Category D:

Category D risk includes all areas other than those classed as Remote Rural and those not falling within Categories A-C. This risk category would apply all other towns not covered under C above. The minimum first attendance for this type of risk is one pump in 20 minutes with a crew.

Category Remote Rural:

Areas may be classified as Remote Rural risks if they are isolated from any centres of population and contain few buildings. There is no minimum attendance time.

Special Risks:

There are certain small areas, whether comprising single buildings or complexes, which need a first attendance over and above that appropriate to the risk that predominates in the surrounding area. These premises or small areas should be

treated as Special Risks, and given appropriate pre-determined attendance. There are many types of Special Risks, but some typical examples might include:

- Residential premises of substantial size and presenting abnormal risks such as hospitals or prisons, wherever they occur.
- Tower blocks, whether residential or commercial in C & D risk areas.
- Major petrochemical or other high risk industrial plant, wherever they occur.
- Airports, wherever they occur.

There is no minimum attendance time.

A sub-committee of the Fire Service Change Programme are currently working on a Risk Based Approach to Emergency Cover in Ireland. The recommendations / outcome of the Fire Service Change Programme will be implemented / adopted by Roscommon Fire Service.

SECTION 13 – FIRE PREVENTION

It should be noted that this plan outlines only the arrangements made with regards to fire and emergency operations and does not take account of the substantial volume of fire prevention and fire safety work carried out by Roscommon County Council as a Fire Authority which includes those detailed below.

Roscommon County Council's **Fire Prevention Staff** advise on current fire safety standards required for proposed and existing developments.

The following are discretionary functions under Fire Services Act 1981

- Advice to Planning Authorities under Section 13 of the Fire Services Act, 1981.
- Advice on fire safety and inspection of existing public premises under Section 18 of the Fire Services Act, 1981, and associated Regulations.
- Inspections of licensed premises under Section 24 of Fire Services Act, 1981, and associated Licensing Acts.
- Inspection of petroleum installations, retail and bulk, under Dangerous Substances Act, 1979, and associated Regulations.

Fire Officers also carry out inspections of Places of Public Assembly and other high-risk premises in the County.